



# The Peligram

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PELICAN ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 Fax 772-567-7283 [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)  
Our 43<sup>th</sup> Year Vol. 43 No. 5 September 2007

**Our Mission:** To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Mon Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 p.m.** PIAS General Meeting at Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
TOPIC: Birding in Trinidad by Gerard Ramsawak.

**Sat Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.** 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Coastal Clean-up. Call 567-3520

### *VOLVO for Life Award Donation*

On July 11, 2007 the Pelican Island Audubon Society received a \$25,000 donation made in the name of Bonnie Swanson, formerly principal of Pelican Island Elementary School and now Principal of Vero Beach Elementary School, in honor of her selection as a finalist in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Volvo for life Awards. In addition to her recognition for outstanding work teaching children (our future) about the need to protect endangered species and the environment, Bonnie for was the driving force behind the Pelican Island Elementary School Eco-Troop's successful effort to purchase 18 residential lots on vital Scrub Jay Habitat. With Bonnie's direction the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders raised nearly \$300,000 and purchased all of the lots. Take some time and visit the Martha Winnegar Park on Barber Street East of Pelican Island Elementary School.

The Volvo for life Awards program has brought Volvo into countless communities in support of the inspiring work of an array of everyday heroes from a little girl. (Continued on Page 2, *Volvo for Life*)

### **Buy A Copy Today!**

You can now purchase your copy of *Reflections of Blue Cypress* on our website using Visa or Mastercard! Visit us at [pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://pelicanislandaudubon.org) to see how!!

## **GENERAL MEETING SEPT. 17, 2007**

### *Birding in Trinidad with Gerard Ramsawak*

Gerard Ramsawak has been bird watching for most of his life but became very active over the last 24 years. He has been birding in many countries including North America, South America and Europe. Mr. Ramsawak specialized in the attraction of Humming Birds to gardens and Bird watching holidays to Trinidad and Tobago. He also specializes in the art of plate illustrations of birds. Mr. Ramsawak worked on many BBC films including *Life of Birds*, *Wild Caribbean* and *Birding with Bill Oddie*, to name a few. Mr. Ramsawak won "The Prime Minister's Award" in 2003 for his contribution to the industry. He also won "Customer Satisfaction Awards" and gold medals, from the Ministry of Tourism of Trinidad & Tobago in 2004, 2005 and 2007. Mr. Ramsawak has been in the hotel/ travel business for the last 14 years.

### *INDIAN RIVER COUNTY BEACH CLEAN-UP*

Saturday, September 15, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. the Pelican Island Audubon Society will be sponsoring its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Coastal Clean-Up. Over the past 20 years hundreds of thousands of people have helped clean-up over 2400 miles of beaches in Florida. Hundreds of Thousands of pounds of garbage and debris have been removed from our beautiful Florida Beaches through this very large community and voluntary effort. All Scout Troops, Youth Church Groups, School groups and concerned citizens are encouraged to come out and join in. The beaches to be included will be as follows: Round Island Oceanside, 2200 Highway A1A, Sebastian Inlet – Southside, 14251 NW A1A, Golden Sands Beach, 10350 N A1A, JC Beach Park and South Beach Park. (Continued on Page 4, *IRC Beach Clean-Up*)

## **Pelican Island Audubon Society**

### **Officers**

President, **Richard H. Baker**  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, **Jens Tripson**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, **Susan Boyd**  
Recording Secretary, **Darlene Halliday**  
Corresponding Secretary, **Jean Catchpole**  
Treasurer, **Robert Adair**

### **Elected Directors**

**Nancy Irvin '10**      **Susan Richardson '10**  
**David Cox '09**      **Roz James '09**  
**Joe Carroll '08**      **Debby Ecker '08**

### **Appointed Board Members**

**Joel Day**                      **Tina Marchese**  
**Melissa Tripson**          **Graig Weyandt**

### **Advisory Board Members**

**Janice Broda**              **Kevin Doty**              **Lynn Larkin**  
**Bob Smith**                **Paul Triaik**              **Billi Wagner**

Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc. is registered with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Div. of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within Florida 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State

### **(Continued form Page 1 VOLVO for Life)**

in Pennsylvania with cancer who raised tens of thousands of dollars for pediatric cancer research, to an elderly expatriate in Rwanda who converted her large estate into an orphanage for displaced children in the wake of the 1994 genocide.

Volvo has introduced the nation to truly unique and selfless individuals who are trying to make a difference, often against incredible odds. Since initiating the Volvo for life Awards five years ago, Volvo has awarded nearly \$5 million in charitable contributions to organizations around the country that are helping to make the world a better place.

This year, the judges for the Volvo for life Awards included Dr. Sally Ride, Paul Newman, Maya Lin, Senator Bill Bradley, Hank Aaron, Val Kilmer, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and Caroline Kennedy.

Bonnie Swanson was chosen as a finalist from over 17,000 nominations for the outstanding work she has done to teach children about the need to protect endangered species and respect the environment. To honor her, Volvo has made a \$25,000 donation to a charity of her choice. Bonnie has chosen the Pelican Island Audubon Society to receive this \$25,000 donation. Audubon can not thank Bonnie Swanson enough for choosing our organization for this very generous donation which she has well deserved and which is well appreciated and needed in our community. With Pelican Island, Indian River Lagoon, and many other numerous protected spe-

cies and environments in our area the need for donations is quite large. On behalf of the Board and members of Pelican Island Audubon Society many thanks go out to Bonnie Swanson and to Volvo.

### **Help for Sea and Shorebirds on the beach**

1. Find help-one to handle, one to untangle.
2. get between the bird and the water.
3. Never-under any circumstances-simply cut the fishing line to free the bird!
4. Avoid lifting the bird by the line, use a net or guide it to shore.
5. Capture (a wet towel is handy); hold the bill first then restrain the bird. Cover the eyes to calm the bird, make sure nostrils can get air.
6. Remove ALL the line-tourniquet and slow death by hanging result from trailing or wrapped line.
7. Hook in skin or bill-if barb can be seen or felt, cut barb off (push thru skin if necessary) then back shank out. Bird can be released if not weak (breast bony under feathers) and has no other injuries.
8. Do not leave hooks in legs, wings, joints, eyes, throat or neck – severe infection can result.
9. Hooks do not disintegrate over time, even ingested ones.
10. Major injuries should be medically cared for, or the bird's chances for survival are minimal.
11. Transport in a cardboard box, unwrap towel so bird doesn't overheat.

**Remember-seabirds will try to defend themselves by biting or stabbing with their long, sharp bills. Avoid serious injury, hold the bill away from your face. Should you come in contact with a bird you believe needs medical attention contact: The Treasure Coast Wildlife Center (772) 286-6200**



## THE PRESIDENT'S HOOT!

### Another pollutant dumped into our Lagoon!

In order to cope with our county's increase human population, Indian River County's utilities department plans to add 6 more deep wells into the Floridian aquifer in the north county and another well in the south county. Before aquifer water is fit to drink, the salt must be removed by forcing the water through membranes, which leaves concentrated brine, which must be disposed of.

Very different than seawater, this brine is toxic to fish. As a result, the US Environmental Protection Agency has ordered the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, (DEP) to stop Indian River County from piping this concentrated brine directly into the Indian River Lagoon from their Reverse Osmosis plant.

To solve this waste brine disposal problem, the Indian River County Utility Department and their consultants have applied for a DEP permit to excavate 22 acres of fine upper salt marsh along our lagoon for the construction of settling ponds and ditches. Brine, diluted with water pumped in from the adjacent lagoon, will flow into 47 acres of mangrove forest and then into 2 ditches that empty into the Lagoon. The county's own Chief Environmental Planner, Roland Dubois, described these coastal wetlands, now euphemistically called "Spoonbill Marsh", and the related buffer uplands having HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE.

Why spend taxpayer money to damage one environmental marsh within the Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserve with designated Class II Outstanding Florida Waters and then spend more taxpayer's money to repair another already damaged marsh?

Moreover, both the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) previously determined the county's plan would have a substantial adverse impact on essential fish habitat

in the Indian River Lagoon. Why risk further ruination of our commercial and recreational fisheries with this ill-conceived venture?

The ramifications of this project are more than local, Humans are running out of potable water around the world. Our Audubon Board and scientists including Florida's Subcommittee on Managed Marshes are concerned that wetlands and estuaries around the country are being examined as potential RO wastewater dumping grounds. Indian River County could be setting a precedent for a major National battle particularly if wetlands and productive estuaries are impacted by RO effluent release.

Dr. Grant Gilmore, a world-class scientist, says the consultants did not adequately address site-specific hydrology, local plants and animals, dynamics, and function as there is so much previous work in local wetlands available. Gilmore did in-depth studies of similar, adjacent wetlands at Grand Harbor in 1990-1994. The county and their consultants also ignored all the valuable regional local fishery species that their project will impact directly.

If this project must go through, we strongly suggest that the County:

- 1. Involve the scientific community and especially consider Gilmore's Grand Harbor 1990-94 study.**
- 2. Evaluate all the valuable regional local fishery species that the project will impact directly.**
- 3. Consider other less sensitive sites or ones already used for mitigation. Why not an inland site as suggested by the National Marine Fisheries Service?**
- 4. This project is estimated to cost \$4 million to build. Set aside long term additional finances to independently monitor the project to determine long-term effects.** Such critical research is not easy as it involves counting fish, birds, dolphins on an annual basis and continuously measuring water quality, as well as determining what is happening to animals, plants, and microorganisms down the food chain, and most important, evaluation of high marsh and mangrove substrates. (Continued next page Hoot)

Pelican Island Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1833  
Vero Beach, FL 32961-1833

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Vero Beach, FL  
Permit No. 101

(Hoot Continued from page 3)

Or will it be simply left to future generations to discover the negative impact on these variables once it's too late to do anything about it?

**5. Plan for what would happen to the toxic brine in the 22 acres if another level 4 hurricane hits the saturated area.**

**6. Normally a high marsh goes through an annual wet and dry period. What will happen to the high marsh if it is saturated all year with diluted brine? One could expect this to negatively affect the food chain.**

Our Lagoon is a precious resource for tourists, food for our tables, nurseries for our fishes, sustenance for our nesting birds, and necessary for our recreation and pleasure. The mangroves in this area also are a protection against hurricanes inundating our homes.

With all of the hazards already threatening our dolphins, turtles, fish, and our sick and dying lagoon, why would we even consider the risks associated with dumping more pollutants into an Aquatic Preserve and thereby risk destroying part of one of the few remaining natural marshes left in Indian River County? At best, this industrial project is a temporary solution, not a sustainable one. It remains to be seen whether the impacts of this project are temporary or permanent.

Surprisingly, the DEP is planning to permit this questionable project! Please in the next **3 days** write a letter of objection to: Department of Environmental Protection, Office of General Counsel, Mail Station 35, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000.

Be sure to include **your name, address, the Department Permit File Number 31-256136-001 in Indian River County** in your objection. A copy to PIAS would be appreciated.

Richard Baker, Ph.D. President

*(Continued from page 1 IRC Beach Clean-Up)*

Pelican Island Audubon Society asks everyone to please come out and take part in the Keep Florida Beautiful program and your community and volunteer a little of your time and effort to clean-up your beaches! Any questions regarding the clean-up can be directed to the PIAS office at 567-3520. A message can be left if there's no answer.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PELICAN ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership benefits include subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine, *Florida Naturalist*, and the PIAS newsletter *The Peligram*. Additionally, members have full borrowing privileges to the PIAS nature library and much more.

Rates are:

\$20 one-year introductory membership

\$30 two-year introductory membership

\$15 students

\$20 Friend (*The Peligram* only)

Please send your name and address along with a check payable to Pelican Island Audubon Society, and mail to P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961